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THE COURT OF ADULTERY:

A VISION.

THE FOURTH EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

" ——————— Oh! why did God,
" Creator wiſe! that peopled higheſt heaven
" With Spirits maſculine, create at laſt
" This novelty on earth, this fair defect
" Of Nature? ———————
" ——————— This miſchief had not then befall'n,
" And more that ſhall befall, innumerable
" Diſturbances on earth through female ſnares
" And ſtrait conjunction with the ſex."

MILTON.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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TO THE

PUBLIC.

THE Author of the following ſheets was at Court on that day when every Engliſhman would wiſh by his preſence to pay a compliment to the Beſt of Kings. The fatigue of a croud ſent him home thoroughly tired, where ſleep ſoon took poſſeſſion of his ſenſes yet bewildered with the varieties of the Drawing-Room, which gave occaſion to the following Viſion: as ſuch he preſents it to the Public, and hopes the candid Reader will pardon the general ſterility, as well as particular inaccuracies of it, and conſider that it is a Dream, or rather a fragment of a Dream.

" In mercy ſpare us, when we do our beſt
" To make as much waſte paper as the reſt."

SPEC. vol. v.

THE

COURT OF ADULTERY.

——METHOUGHT, enthron'd on high
Sat *England*'s QUEEN in aweful majesty.
Her seat three kindred Gods uphold in air,
Whose emblematic forms their names declare:
This side supported by a maiden Youth,
Whose naked charms bespeak ingenuous *Truth*:

The

The golden ſcales on that ſo equal ſeem,
'Tis *Juſtice* only holds the ſtedfaſt beam:
In front an holy Maid with brow ſerene,
Mercy her name, ſupports the aweful Queen.
L-D blows the trump, and L--Y beats the drum;
Surrounding myriads to the judgement come.
Serene the air, and ſilent all around;
E'en Zephyrs ſeem to liſten to the ſound.
Thus ſpeaks the Queen: "Adult'rous race, draw near!"
And herald T--p echoes thrice, "Draw near!"
Encircling crouds preſs forward to the throne,
When thus the Youth proclaims th' eternal doom.
" Long has our flag triumphant rul'd the ſeas,
" And proſtrate Kings obey'd our dread decrees;

" From

" From *Andaluſia*'s rock to *India*'s ſhore
" Both Arts and Arms confirm'd our ſov'reign pow'r.
" Now view the ſad reverſe; hear War's alarms;
" On ev'ry ſide advance the adverſe arms.
" *Britannia*'s foes the Eaſtern Phœbus lights,
" On *Britain*'s num'rous foes the Weſtern ſets.
" The angry Gods on you adult'rous race
" Pour down this vengeance, and our arms diſgrace:
" Hear then your doom—The ſacred embers riſe,
" And one muſt fall the common ſacrifice.
" There burns the altar, here your cauſes plead,
" The deepeſt guilt the common victim bleed."
Thus ſpake the Youth, and thrice he bow'd his head:
A gen'ral fear the trembling croud o'er-ſpread.

Firſt modeſt A - -R roſe, and bluſhing ſaid,

(For A - -R bluſhes in perpetual red)

" If ſin can venial be, ſure A - -R's muſt,

" Whom ne'er ambition urg'd, but genuine luſt."

Scarce had ſhe ſpoke——With all the pride of B——

Imperious P - - roſe, and urg'd her ſuit.

" If luſt be venial, paſſion be a plea,

" Adult'ry's ſelf muſt ſtand excus'd in me;

" Me, who, ere *England* bow'd to STEWART's race,

" From B—'s notorious ſtock my lineage trace.

" Old age to my embrace no pride e'er join'd;

" Round luſty youth alone my limbs have twin'd:

" No Star, no Title, revell'd in my arms;

" My humble luſt fought only *naked charms.*

" 'Tis

" 'Tis true, ye Fair, ambition bad me wed,
" But brought its punifhment in P - - 's bed.
" If love, defpair, if paffion plead for life,
" Think, though I err'd, I err'd a Maiden Wife."

" A Maiden Wife !" cries M - - D's hackney'd Jade,
" What ! treat a Hufband with a maid-nh--d !
" Triumphant *Ton*, fuch grov'ling thoughts difcard,
" And ev'ry Maiden Bride meet your reward.
" Scarce dirty ALNW--K's dirtieft wench but knew
" Some feeble efforts due alone to you.
" Each foft embrace in vain your charms difplay'd ;
" He fhunn'd thofe charms——becaufe you was a Maid.
" Thefe be our diff'rent fates : to die be thine,
" Nor add one glory to the P - - Y line ;

" While

" While great exploits recording M - - D's name
" To lateſt times ſhall chronicle my fame.
" My various loves each ſofter muſe ſhall ſing;
" And tell how P - - NS feaſted *D - - k*'s K—;
" To vig'rous D - - T how reſign'd her charms;
" How caught ambition in her F-TZR-Y's arms.
" Ambition, ſacred name! myſterious ſpring
" Of fame, diſgrace, vice, virtue, ev'ry-thing!
" Rous'd by thy ſoaring fires, I firſt was led
" To G - - N's couch, to D - - T's luſtful bed;
" And guided ſtill by thy auſpicious flame
" Have ſmuggled honeſty and M - - D's name.
" Thy fickle fires were G - - N's ſecret ſpring
" Firſt to endanger, then defert his K—.

" Warm'd

" Warm'd by thy genial heat, methinks I feel
" Courage to bear, ſin to deſerve, the ſteel;
" Plunge, plunge it deep, and rouſe the altar's flame,
" And with the riſing ſmoke riſe M - - D's name:
" She nobly ſins who glories in her ſhame."
Dumb admiration ſeiz'd the gaping throng,
To hear ſuch courage from a female tongue.

Thrice D - - Y roſe, but D - - Y's unripe face
Betray'd, alas! remains of childiſh grace.
The Gothic bluſh ſhe thrice ſuppreſt in vain,
While B - - D ſcorn'd, and T - - HE mock'd her pain.
Her fault'ring voice in broken accents told
Of ſlighted paſſions, and of Maidens ſold;

Of ugly Huſbands, and of Lover's charms;
Then fell and fainted into D--T's arms.
By various *grins* the wond'ring croud expreſs
Their various excellence in wantonneſs.
In ready ſmiles the S---ES all declare,
If not a w----ſh, yet a *Tom*-iſh air:
E'en V--N's *maiden* cheeks no mod'rate ſneer
Diſtends, while T--HE gapes from ear to ear.
Entendres now in open vollies fly,
And jokes on jokes with thund'ring torrents vie.
T--D had ſmil'd, but T--D rules with ſkill
Muſcles obedient to a tyrant's will.
D--R, M--N, and M--RP's matchleſs Dame,
Who knows not what a bluſh is, but by name,

With H - - r's front, which Wh--edom's public ſchool
Hath practis'd well in *Ton's* unerring rule,
Preſs on the fainting Fair; reproaches loud
Ruſh undiſtinguiſh'd from the ſneering croud;
Till B - - d's, haughty B - - d's, louder tongue
Riſes ſuperior to the buzzing throng;
Pride in her ſtately ſtep, ſcorn in her eye,
Her tongue thus tells her mind's depravity:
" Riſe, D - - y, riſe, nor let a bluſh diſgrace
" The finer features of a *Ton*-iſh face:
" I long, like you, was chaſte; but now behold
" A modiſh wife, wh--e, game---r, ch--t, and ſcold:
" But I nor bluſh, nor fear the dread decree;
" Want pleads for me, and want's a pow'rfull plea.

" Then

" Then you, my D - -, no aſſiſtance need;
" Six Executions ſure a pardon plead.
" Riſe then, my Fair, and, by a Siſter's fate,
" Learn to be happy, and to bleſs your ſtate:
" Gild but the tops, your Huſband's choiceſt care
" Will be his horns, while you the breeches wear."

A - - - R next, methought, with modeſt mien
Survey'd the croud, and thus approach'd the Queen.
" 'Tis here the dagger points," —and bar'd her breaſt —
" 'Tis I muſt fall, —'tis I muſt ſave the reſt.
" Bluſh, bluſh, ye Fair, and hear the guilty tale;
" Abhor my ſin, and hither plunge the ſteel.
" Full well ye Lovers knew, full well ye Fair,
" The force of innocence, and Fanny's air;

" When

" When flatt'ry's incenſe emulation fir'd,
" While Women envy'd, and while Men admir'd;
" When each new bluſh gave love ſome new alarms,
" And conſcious merit aided nature's charms:
" Not fam'd *Arcadia*'s plains could boaſt a Dame
" More great in beauty, or more high in fame:
" Such M--s was—Good Gods! how chang'd my fate!
" Is there a wretch ſo miſerably great?

" Return, ye tranſient hours of guiltleſs youth,
" Whoſe pride was virtue, and whoſe love was truth;
" Return, ye genial viſions of repoſe,
" Which honor guarded, which from virtue roſe;
" Return what once was M--R's' ſpotleſs fame,
" From conſcience ſhield T---L's endleſs ſhame.

" But

" But whence this change? Why err'd ingenuous youth
" From ways of innocence, and paths of truth?
" Did keen remorſe, on virtue's ruins built,
" (Which plunges guilty minds in deeper guilt)
" Did want, did paſſion prompt? Of treach'rous love
" Did unſuſpecting youth the victim prove?
" Alas! in me no want, no paſſion's ſway,
" Can palliate guilt; 'twas Faſhion led the way:
" No love, no treach'ry, claims from you, ye Fair,
" From you, or pity, claims one penſive tear:
" 'Twas Faſhion rul'd, and Faſhion bad me wed,
" Though doom'd to mis'ry, and T---'s bed;
" Cold, cold T---, whoſe chill languid frame
" Might fan love's fires, but ne'er could quench its flame.

" Now view the happy Maid a wretched Wife,
" The ſport of jealouſy, the cauſe of ſtrife.

" How bleſt the Fair! thrice bleſt her lot muſt prove,
" Where prudence ſanctifies the choice of love!
" No ſep'rate wiſh ſhe has, no joy ſhe can,
" Where name of Huſband graces that of Man;
" On her no cold, no partial bleſſing's ſhed,
" As well the partner of his ſoul as bed.

" Not, M--rs, ſuch thy fate! No parent's voice
" To curb youth's paſſions, or confirm its choice:
" Death long had cloſ'd thoſe eyes; not one remain'd
" To add experience to the name of Friend,
" Save thee, moſt honor'd Youth——but ſpare my ſhame,
" Oh! ſpare the bluſh that e'er attends thy name.

" The

" Thou might'ſt have rul'd, have taught the tender vine
" To claſp ſome heart congenial more to thine:
" But, oh! 'twas folly, folly fir'd my mind,
" And form'd T - - - of angelic kind:
" Deluded wretch! for ever mourn thy flame;
" 'Twas jealouſy aſſum'd T - - - 's name.
" Deck, deck the bow'rs, ye Maids, the torches light,
" The altar raiſe to Hymen, Love, and Night;
" Fill high the ſparkling bowl, ye Maids, I cry'd—
" Fill high the bowl, T - - - ſtrait reply'd.
" Each day with eaſe, with pleaſure paſs'd each night:
" 'Twas love, 'twas joy—but, oh! 'twas all deceit.
" Now on his front ſat rankling anxious cares,
" While down each cheek diſtill'd the jealous tears.

" Then

" Then would he ſwear he lov'd, he too much lov'd,
" And ſympathizing ſighs the tale approv'd.
" Scarce could I blame myſelf, my thoughtleſs age,
" My whims, my follies, but again he'd rage;
" Scarce could ſubmit, and own the fault in me,
" But from his mouth came doubly urg'd the plea.
" My virgin days of eaſe, my nights of reſt,
" In Mem'ry's eye ſeem'd now, now doubly bleſt:
" Yet ſtill he lov'd, for ſtill my beauties fir'd,
" But fear'd thoſe beauties that he moſt admir'd.
" Conceive my pain (I pity all who can)
" At once the pride, the fear, the ſcorn of man.

" No love now urg'd by day, no wiſh by night,
" Me to receive, or him to give delight:

" I ſaw eaſe, honor, e'en good-nature fade,
" And curs'd the laws that aught but love had made.
" Here, Cenſure, here thy keeneſt arrows ſhed;
" I ſought abroad what home and he forbad.

" But own, my ſoul, (confeſſion's all you can)
" You lov'd the Huſband, though you loath'd the Man.
" Repent the day when honor firſt could fail,
" When M--RS err'd, and ſcandal ſpread the tale.
" I ſaw, I burn'd; Love urg'd a quick diſpatch,
" And languid Virtue ſlumber'd on the watch:
" Quick on my heart the rebel paſſion preſt—
" But let a bluſh and fancy paint the reſt.

" Now view me far, far launch'd on Faſhion's tide,
" Slave of variety, and ſport of pride;

" Without

" Without a Goddeſs; but a wretch within,
" Seeking relief from ſin in greater ſin.
" Sage B - - - r, ſay, (for thy experienc'd mind
" Well knows the ſting Remorſe has left behind)
" Say what it is to ſin, reflect, repent;
" Then ſin as though repentance ne'er were meant:
" To ſeek, reject; renounce, but ſtill purſue;
" *Repent old pleaſures, but ſollicit new.*
" Cenſure, ye Fair, whoſe footſteps never ſlide,
" Who never err'd, becauſe ye ne'er were try'd.
" But if one gen'rous heart my woes can feel;
" If one ſoft eye a penſive tear can ſteal;
" If one alike in grief, alike in ſin,
" Can weep her own, and ſympathize in mine;

" (And

" (And one there ſurely is, for C - - here
" Will bluſh, and drop the ſympathetic tear;
" Here too will O - - - r grant my humble boon,
" And weep my ſin, who ever weeps her own)
" If one, who Virtue ſeeks, and not her name,
" Nor ſcorns temptation 'cauſe no tempter came;
" (Like thee, my G - - r, thee, whoſe noble mind
" Shows how angelic may be woman-kind)
" If ſuch there be, tell Scandal's murd'rous tribe,
" Tell rigid Sanctity, tell ſcornfull Pride,
" Tell CHATS—H's ſprightly Dame, tell Faſhion's train,
" How ſtrait from pleaſure is the path to pain.
" The happy Maid, the virtuous Fair-one tell,
" Within my breaſt how burns a more than hell.

" Can

" Can guilt like mine, ye Fair, for pardon plead ?

" —— On to the altar then, I'll freely bleed."

——— When, lo ! in her white ſhroud clad,

Cold from Death's dark abyſs, a trembling ſhade,

With one pale hand uplift, and modeſt mien,

Approach'd, (methought 'twas *D*- - *k*'s contrite Q- - N)

Thrice dropp'd the tear, and, beating thrice her breaſt,

The voluntary victim thus addreſt:

" Here, Siſter, haſte ; 'tis here the wretched reſt,

" And all find bliſs, though variouſly bleſt :

" Here manſions num'rous as the ſtars of heav'n

" To diff'rent ſouls are diff'rently giv'n.

" On Conquerors' brows, whom mercies t'heav'n bring,

" Here laurels flouriſh in eternal ſpring ;

‘ Here Kings perpetual peace’s ſceptre ſway,

‘ And e’en thy ſubjects, *Britain*, here obey:

‘ Here too can Virgin vows, and Veſtal’s pray’r,

‘ For Superſtition’s ſelf a ſeat prepare,

‘ And guardian angels waft the holy Nun,

‘ No more to war with Nature, and with Man.

‘ Tremble the harden’d ſouls, whoſe crimes defy

‘ That God, whom conſcience and themſelves would fly;

‘ Whoſe common guilt can brave the bluſh, and ſhame

‘ E’en decency with Whoredom’s public name.

‘ This palm be thine, unrivall’d G---R, thine,

‘ G---R the great, the uniform in ſin.

‘ Not ſuch art thou; then claim the rank in heav’n,

‘ Which penitence prepares for ſins forgiv’n.

‘ To

‘ To realms of calm tranquillity and eaſe
‘ Seclusion’s feeble wings her vot’ries raiſe:
‘ Such claim the cloyſter vows, and well-told beads;
‘ High ſoars the tear repentant error ſheds;
‘ Scenes of extatic joy the Gods aſſign
‘ To her, and be they O - - - r’s and thine.

‘ Far diff’rent manſions wait thy parting breath,
‘ Laſcivious B - -, vicious e’en to death.
‘ High ride thy ſtately yacht, while hov’ring gales
‘ Fan the rich purple of her panting ſails;
‘ High ride her helm, where wealth and pleaſure guide,
‘ And make old Ocean’s boſom ſwell with pride:
‘ Swift to *Italia*’s luſcious ſhores convey
‘ The Queen of Luſt, of Sin, of Bigamy;

‘ Where

‘ Where each new day ſhall hail ſome new delight,

‘ And golden abſolution crown each night.

‘ Deluding phantaſy! one ſhort, ſhort year,

‘ Or month, or day perhaps, and B - - L’s here;

‘ Here clos’d in death, forgetting and forgot,

‘ In cold oblivion where our glories rot;

‘ Her ſhade ſtill hov’ring nigh in anxious fear;

“ For God, not Man, abſolves our frailties here.”

‘ S - - E awhile may rear her guilty head,

‘ And youth may ſcorn the dictates of the dead;

‘ But, ah! too near old-age, and age’s fears

‘ Approach, and murder’d S - -’s ghoſt appears:

‘ The injur’d Shade ſhall haunt each houſe, each room,

‘ Stalk round each bed, and awe the midnight gloom.

‘ What

'What fears, what terrors then ſhall be her lot!
'E'en B — ſhall ſpurn the child that G — begot.
'Now worn with ſins of youth, and age's fears,
'S - - E diſſolves in agonizing tears.

'But, ſee! down Diſſolution's path appear
'Two trembling Shades, whoſe guide is cold Deſpair:
'See how they caſt a ling'ring look behind,
'Catch at each twig, and graſp each paſſing wind,
'Struggle with age; to ſnatch one hour from death,
'Would pawn the bleſt futurity of faith.
'But, ſee! they come, while deeds of matchleſs fame
'In Mem'ry's page thus eternize their name:

‘ When future luſts with ſuch new glories reign
‘ As baffle former language to explain,
‘ Hence ſhall men call them H - - - and V —.

‘ A - - - ER, thee await the roſeate bow’rs,
‘ Celeſtial chaplets, and perennial flow’rs;
‘ Haſte then where Penitence on ſins forgiv’n
‘ Show’rs mercies like the dews of op’ning heav’n.’

Then one pale hand, methought, o’er Death’s abode
She gently wav’d, while t’other claſpt her ſhroud.
‘ ’Tis here repentant ſinners reſt: ’tis here
‘ E’en griefs forget to mourn, and guilt to fear.’
Thus ſpake the Shade; then vaniſh’d from my ſight,
Wrapt in encircling clouds of endleſs night.

“ Now

" —Now ſtrike! I brave thee, Death; thy dart I'll kiſs,
" While Angels waft my ſoul to realms of bliſs.
" And thou, T - - -, thou, that deck'dſt awhile
" My bridal bed, ſhalt light my fun'ral pile;
" Then drop one parting tear, and gently ſigh,
" *Here with her aſhes let her follies die.*
" Then ſhall I happy any region view
" That will but hide me from my ſhame—and you.
" Long may'ſt thou live, enjoying and enjoy'd,
" The happier Huſband of ſome happier Bride,
" Whom giddy Faſhion may not tempt to err;
" And thou, e'en thou, not know one jealous fear.
" May youth and age their ſev'ral bleſſings ſhed;
" Health at thy board, and pleaſure on thy bed:

" Then

" Then long, long years, may hoary Wiſdom crown
" Thy brows with fame, thy mem'ry with renown :
" And when the envious Fates ſhall cut thy thread,
" And Death ſhall wing his arrows at thy head,
" May ſofteſt ſlumbers watch thy pillow round,
" Pour in their balm, and cloſe the gaping wound ;
" And thou, without a groan, a tear, a ſigh,
" Glide unrelenting to Eternity."

THE END.